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Geometry is a Chimera threatening Mankind

Currently, in the town of Oberkirch the paintings of Rolf Behm can be appreciated due to the mediating role of Werner Schmidt.

OBERKIRCH. For more than a year several exhibitions have been taking place in the former library's rooms of the old Oberkirch town hall. They have been curated by artists from Oberkirch. The responsible for the current exhibition is Werner Schmidt who invited the Berlin artist Rolf Behm. The contact with Behm has existed for decades, they knew each other in 1984.

In the seventies Behm studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe assisting classes guided by Markus Lüpertz, and after his studies he moved to Berlin. Since then, the Karlsruhe born artist has been living and working there as well as in Rio de Janeiro. In 1984 he got a scholarship for a residence at the Villa Romana in Florence, and it was there, where he met Schmidt.

The works Behm is showing at the moment in Oberkirch have all been produced during the last two years. At the vernissage, that was musically framed by the young guitar player Lukas Krüger, Behm explained that many times, he is working on 20 paintings simultaneously. Once the feeling arises that a painting has come to its end, this single painting has to be understood as a result of experiences acquired through these parallel working processes.

For the understanding of his paintings, this statement is essential. They contain an open process which even includes the painting's turning during the working process. Paint drips which flow in different directions characterize this procedure.

Behm deals absolutely freely with color and form and no painting is just like the other, though they all dispose of a common handwriting. In these paintings there is a deep understanding of composition that does not simply play with areas of color and occasionally, on the surface, makes appear some figurative associations emerging from inside, but it also elicits voluminous figures pushing them back shortly after and in spite of everything it is able to give the whole a strong support on its ground. This way of composition works in his painting as well as in his new technique of collage that also comprises drawing elements. We can perceive a certain preference by the painter for the variously natured square. Contrasting in color, it may be painted or glued in form of a piece of paper. As suggested in the vernissage talks, the idea of a suitcase's image inside a scanning equipment, -that means, looking from above onto the there enclosed objects, would be an appropriate way of describing these paintings.

One of the of paintings' series is called „Malergepäck“(painter's baggage), the other one „Schimärengometrie“(Chimera's geometry). The latter could be interpreted as open free and instable form, in contrast to a rigid conserving and organizing form, similar to the fight with a chimera, that hybrid fire spitting creature in antique mythology, which equally threatens man and animals, in his fused appearance of partly lion, goat and snake. Furthermore Behm's paintings are of massive colorfullness, within a range from pale to intense, brilliant to opaque, harmonious to contrasting tones.